

Research Project

Changing perspectives on age and ageing: A project to impact and raise awareness on elder abuse and ageism

Third-party funded project

Project title Changing perspectives on age and ageing: A project to impact and raise awareness on elder abuse and ageism

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Department

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Elder abuse and ageism are societal problems that must be addressed. They affect older persons living both in the community and nursing homes. Available evidence suggests that up to 10% of community living older adults are at risk of experiencing abuse within a period of one year. In the nursing homes, 10% – 80% of the nurses report having committed or witnessing an act of abuse towards older patients. Although people may believe that such poor actions does not occur “in my backyard”, elder abuse and ageism affects economically rich nations such as Switzerland as well. To date there is lack of both research and socially oriented projects to address this societal and ethical problem. The World Health Organization, the European Union, and national organizations working for older adults highlight the importance of addressing elder abuse and ageism since older person like everyone else have the right to live a life of dignity, free from abuse, and discrimination. Finally, in light of the demographic change with the greying of the population addressing this concern is of utmost importance. Thus, the goal of this community oriented project in Switzerland is to raise awareness on elder abuse and ageism in the country by inviting participants to take a critical look at stereotypes and age discriminations. We aim to achieve our goal through the following objectives:

1. Allow exchange between different populations on intergenerational relationships, age, and the ageing process.
2. Seek to positively impact participants' perspectives and attitudes towards age, ageing, and ills of elder abuse
3. Provide knowledge on the mechanisms to address elder abuse and ageism

The project consists of short films screenings followed by a discussion with the audience on ageing, ageism, and elder abuse. Three different types of events will be carried out 18 times in total, both in the German and French speaking parts of Switzerland. Participation will be free of costs for all audience. The procedure will be the same for the three types of events, but the target population will differ. Event A (Special screenings and debate) will bring together nursing homes residents (n=90), occupational therapists (n=18), and high school students (n=300) and their teachers (n=12). Event A will reach 438 persons. Event B (Festival screenings and debate) will target the general population, festival public, and film professionals (Total reach n=450). Event C (Public screenings and debate) will focus on the general population, among others older people in the community, family caregivers, health and social professionals, etc. (Total reach n=1250). Overall, the project will directly have an impact on 2138 persons in

Switzerland. A well-structured communication and public relations concept will increase the impact of the project. It includes communication in digital and traditional medias (national, local, and specialized), as well as publications in professional and scientific newsletters. Eight short movies on ageing, inter-generational relationships, ageism and elder abuse have been produced during Spring 2017 by ECAL students (Ecole cantonale d'art de Lausanne, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland, Bachelor in cinema) in collaboration with two professional film directors and the applicant's team. They will be used as a medium for discussions and debate with participants. Media is a creative way to send a strong message in neutral ways. As these movies are artistic works, they offer [to think in another way](#), they invite to take [a new look at stereotypes](#) and discrimination. A quiz on ageism will also be completed by the participants before the screening and discussed during the debate. A short evaluation survey will also be used to assess objectives' achievement. All participants will receive a booklet including a short presentation of each short movies, facts sheets about ageing, ageism, and elder abuse, the quiz on ageism and the evaluation survey. Nursing homes occupational therapists and teachers will also receive a pedagogical guide and a DVD with materials and ideas of activities for future use.

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